

RECYCLING BEST PRACTICES: APARTMENTS



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While recycling can pose a change for any household, apartment buildings have the added challenge of high tenant turnover and the presence of multiple languages. The key for successful recycling is to make it as easy as possible for tenants, have adequate space for recycling containers, and to make sure each tenant/unit has access to information of what is and is not recyclable. The following best practices were gathered from studies by the U.S. EPA and Eureka Recycling, and from a multi-family recycling system used in Coon Rapids, MN.

Best Practices:

1. Recycling and trash paired together at every enclosure
2. Recycling dumpsters are ideal, instead of carts
3. Recycling capacity: 6-22 gallons per unit, at least
4. Trash capacity: 24-64 gallons per unit, at least
5. Ratio of recycling capacity to trash capacity should be equal
6. Dumpsters serviced accordingly to accommodate the recycling and trash capacity
7. Recycling and trash dumpsters should be inside an enclosure
8. Recycling/trash enclosure should be free of bulky and hazardous items
9. Clear signage on the dumpsters and around enclosure
10. Clear signage in common area of apartment complex
11. Recycling information given to each tenant upon moving in
12. Set recycling guide distribution methods, given on a regular basis

Continual reminders and outreach is crucial in maintaining participation and ensuring that the recycling is not contaminated. An annual or quarterly reminder about the recycling service and what is accepted will increase the chances that the recycling containers will be used correctly. It is important to clear the recycling stream of non-recyclables, and the best way to ensure that is to have clear signage of what is and is not recyclable around the recycling/trash enclosure.